

SUICIDE: HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT ONLINE AND SUPPORT PREVENTION EFFORTS IN AND BEYOND YOUR COMMUNITY



The Creator Program works to create [toolkits and briefings](#) that help content creators spread evidence-based health information on social media. The information provided is meant to be educational and is not a substitute for medical advice.

Designed for content creators, healthcare providers, and advocates, this toolkit promotes responsible messaging to reduce stigma and encourage safe, supportive dialogue around suicide prevention on social media.

REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION

Every person deserves access to mental health resources and suicide prevention support. This section outlines how to reframe the conversation about suicide on social media, empowering people to contribute to supportive environments:

1

THERE ARE ALMOST ALWAYS WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE

It is a misconception that suicide happens without warning. [Warning signs](#) can look like hopelessness, mood swings, drinking and using drugs more often, and avoiding friends, among others.

Make sure that your communities know that people who are exhibiting warning signs are not doing it ‘for attention.’ Encourage people to show empathy and provide resources instead of minimizing these experiences.

2

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE AND PROVIDING RESOURCES DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many known [factors that reduce suicide risk](#) including social connection, access to mental healthcare, and a strong cultural identity. Raising awareness about suicide prevention in school settings is also known to [reduce suicide attempts and suicidal ideation](#).

Whenever discussing suicide or mental health crises, include resources like crisis hotline numbers (e.g., 988 and [BlackLine](#) in the U.S.) or direct links to mental health organizations. This supports those at risk by offering immediate options for help.

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3

TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE DOESN'T INCREASE RISK — SHARING GRAPHIC DETAILS DOES

When speaking about suicide on social media, focus on the broader issue and preventive measures. Let your community know that if they are concerned that someone is thinking about suicide, it's ok to talk to them about it. Asking [doesn't increase the chance](#) that someone will develop or act on suicidal thoughts.

While talking about suicide doesn't increase risk, you should limit specific details about methods used in suicide, since sharing these is known to [increase deaths by suicide](#).

4

SUICIDE IS NOT THE RESULT OF A SINGLE CAUSE

There are known risk factors like a history of mental illness; trauma; access to lethal means like firearms; financial stress; discrimination; [and others](#).

Acknowledge the complexity of the factors that lead to suicide when discussing this topic with your community.

TAKE ACTION

1

ADVOCATE FOR SAFE SUICIDE PREVENTION CONTENT IN SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACES

Encourage organizations to adopt responsible messaging guidelines and to include mental health education in their curriculums. Publicly support policies that expand access to mental health services in your community.

2

PARTNER WITH TRUSTED MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

Collaborate with organizations such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) or NAMI to disseminate accurate information and resources, which can help in creating impactful, evidence-based content.

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3

ENGAGE WITH CRISIS SUPPORT NETWORKS

Promote and share information about local and national suicide prevention resources, like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in the U.S., and the crisis text line at 741741, which both provide confidential 24/7 support. Though rare, contacting 988 or the crisis text line [can get law enforcement involved](#), so also be sure to highlight alternative resources for community members who do not want to interact with police. For example, [BlackLine](#) (800-604-5841) is a crisis hotline designed primarily for the Black, Black LGBTQI, Brown, Native and Muslim community that does not involve law enforcement.

4

USE SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES TO TALK WITH YOUR COMMUNITIES ABOUT THIS TOPIC

Use Language Thoughtfully: Avoid phrases like “epidemic” or “suicide contagion,” which can create panic. Stick to terms like “suicide prevention,” “mental health support,” or “died by suicide.” Using clinical, non-judgmental language is [key in reducing stigma](#).

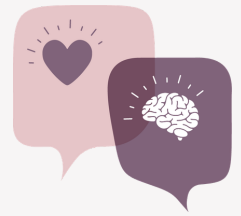
Highlight Help and Hope: Posts about suicide should focus on solutions, recovery, and hope. Share stories of recovery and emphasize that help is available. Whenever possible, include contact information for crisis intervention services.

Promote Accurate Information: Avoid sharing unverified statistics or anecdotes that might misrepresent the nature or frequency of suicide. Instead, use verified data from reputable sources like the CDC, NIMH, or WHO.

Handle Personal Stories with Care: If sharing personal accounts, avoid details that romanticize or provide specifics about suicidal actions. Emphasize resilience and the importance of seeking help, focusing on recovery instead of the crisis itself.



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STATS TO KNOW



1 person dies by suicide [every 11 minutes](#) in the United States.



States that pass anti-transgender laws see a jump in suicide risk by [as much as 72%](#)



Suicide is the [3rd leading cause of death](#) for people 15-29.



Globally, [720,000 people](#) a year die by suicide.

CONTENT RESOURCES

For those creating content about suicide prevention, these resources provide guidelines and support:

- [ReportingOnSuicide.org](#): Best practices for media and content creators on discussing suicide safely and effectively.
- [AFSP](#): Resources for public education on suicide prevention and mental health.
- [WHO's LIVE LIFE Toolkit](#): Guidelines for country-specific and community-focused suicide prevention strategies

DEEPER DIVES

- [The Center for Suicide Research and Prevention](#): (Matthew Nock and Jordan Smoller's center) For in-depth research on suicide risk prediction and mental health interventions.
- [Moving America's Soul on Suicide](#): The film shares the remarkable stories of men and women who have triumphed over trauma, pain, and mental health challenges. It takes a look into what leads a person to these dark places, but more importantly, shines a light on how to help them find their way back.
- [Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors](#): A nonprofit devoted to support, collective healing, and support groups for individuals who have lost family to suicide.
- [Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals](#): This guide from the World Health Organization covers Dos and Donts for reporting on suicide in the media.